

**Amendment to March 19, 2003 Office Action**

REMARKS

The title of the invention was objected to as allegedly not being descriptive. Title has been amended to recite a "TELEPRESENCE SYSTEM AND METHOD USING SURGICAL ASSEMBLIES AND MOUNTING JOINTS." As "surgical instrument assemblies" and "articulated mounting joints" are recited in claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the objection to the title be lifted.

The disclosure was objected to as allegedly having continuation data in the first paragraph that required updating. The data in the first paragraph now includes patent numbers for the application serial numbers. Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the disclosure be lifted.

The abstract was objected to on formal grounds. The abstract has been amended to recite elements of claim 1. Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the abstract be lifted.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Wang et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,855,583). Re-examination and reconsideration of claims 1-5 is respectfully requested. New claims 6-11 have been added to more distinctly claim the invention.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite "positioning the manipulator arm by articulating a mounting joint." As the Wang et al. reference does not describe or suggest such a mounting joint, amended claim 1 is allowable over the Wang et al. reference.

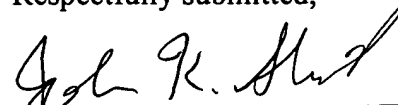
Claims 2-11 depend on claim 1. These claims are allowable as depending on an allowable claim and reciting additional novel aspects of the invention.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Techniques and structures perform robotically-assisted surgical procedures on a patient. Articulated mounting joints support a three-component surgical system that includes a non-sterile drive and control component, a sterilizable end effector or surgical tool and an intermediate connector component. A non-sterile drive component includes a manipulator arm, and a plurality of surgical instrument assemblies are provided for connection to the manipulator arm. The manipulator arm is suitably positioned relative to the patient by moving the articulated mounting joint. The mounting joint is fixed while the arm is positioned and oriented relative to the patient.